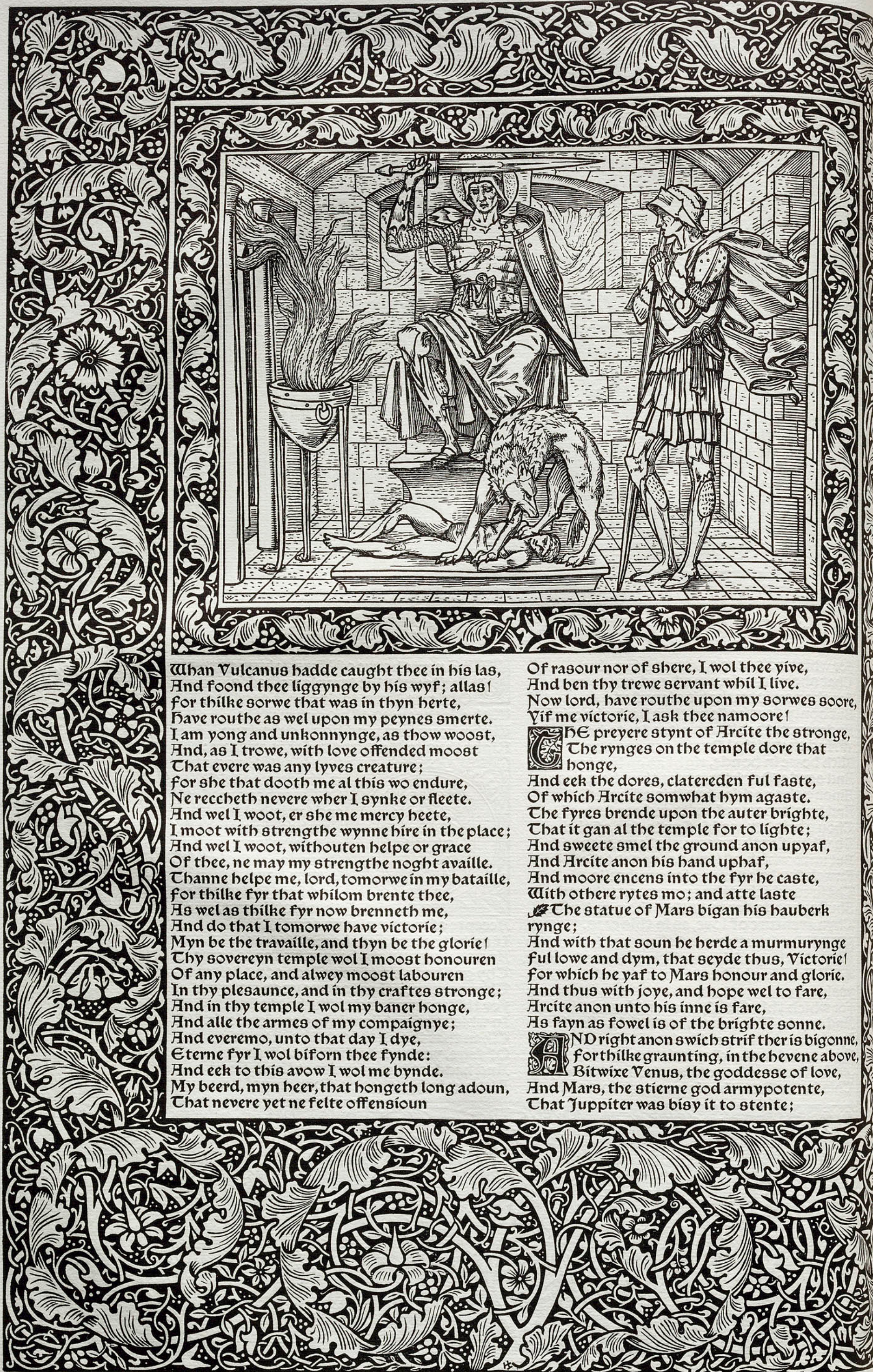




Whan Vulcanus hadde caught thee in his las,
And found thee liggynge by his wyf; alas!
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routh as wel upon my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonnyng, as thou woost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended moost
That evere was any lyses creature;
For she that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne recbeth nevere wher I synke or fleete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy heete,
I moot with strengthe wyne hire in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Channe helpe me, lord, tomorwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whilom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me,
And do that I tomorwe have victorie;
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
Thy sovereyn temple wol I moost honouren
Of any place, and alwey moost labouren
In thy plesaunce, and in thy craftes stronge;
And in thy temple I wol my baner hongre,
And alle the armes of my compaignye;
And everemo, unto that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee fynde:
And eek to this avow I wol me bynde.
My beard, myn heer, that hongeth long adoun,
That nevere yet ne felte offensoun

Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And ben thy trewe servant whil I live.
Now lord, have routh upon my sorwes soore,
Yif me victorie, I ask thee namore!
THE preyer styt of Arcite the stronge,
The rynges on the temple dore that
hongre,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,
Of which Arcite somewhat hym agaste.
The fyres brende upon the auter brighte,
That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
And sweete smel the ground anon upyaf,
And Arcite anon his hand uphaf,
And moore encens into the fyr he caste,
With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk
ryngre;
And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
ful lowe and dym, that seyde thus, 'Victorie!
for which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.
AND right anon swich strif ther is bigonne,
for thilke graunting, in the hevne above,
Bitwixe Venus, the goddessse of love,
And Mars, the stierne god armypotente,
That Juppiter was bisy it to stente;

Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so manye of adventures olde,
foond in his olde experience an art,
That he ful soone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is seyde, elde hath greet advantage;
In elde is bothe wysdom and usage;
Men may the olde atrenne, and noght atrede.
Saturne anon, to stynten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
Of al this strif he gan remedie fynde.

MY deere doghter Venus, quod Saturne,
My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
Hath moore power than woot any man.
Myn is the drenchyng in the see so wan;
Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
Myn is the stranglyng and hanging by the throte;
The murmure, and the cherles rebellynge,
The groynynge, and the pryvee empoysonyng;
I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
While I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
Myn is the ruyn of the hye halles,
The fallynge of the toures and of the walles
Upon the mynour or the carpenter.
I slow Sampson in shakynge the piler;
And myne be the maladyes colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
My lookyng is the fader of pestilence.
Now wepe namore, I shal doon diligence
That Palamon, that is thyn owene knyght,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Though Mars shal helpe his knyght, yet natheless
Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
Al be ye noght of o compleccioun,
That causeth al day swich divisoun.
I am thyn aiel, redy at thy wille;
Weep now namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.

NOW wol I stynten of the goddess above,
Of Mars, and of Venus, goddessse of love,
And telle yow, as pleyntly as I kan,
The grete effect, for which that I bygan.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

REEF was the feeste in At-
thenes that day,
And eek the lusty seson of
that May
Made every wight to been in
such plesaunce,
That al that Monday justen
they and daunce,
And spenden it in Venus
heigh servyse;

But, by the cause that they sholde ryse
Early, for to seen the grete fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at nyght.
And on the morwe, whan that day gan sprynge,
Of hors and harneys, noyse and claterynge
Ther was in hostelryes al aboute,
And to the paleys rood ther many a route
Of lordes, upon steedes and palfreys.
Ther maystow seen devisynge of harneys
So unkouth and so riche, and wrought so weel
Of goldsmithrye, of browdynge, and of steel;
The sheeldes bright, testeres, and trappures;

Gold/hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote/armures;
Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
Knyghtes of retenue, and eek squieres
Nailyng the speres, and helmes bokelyng,
Giggynge of sheeldes, with layneres lacyng;
Ther as nede is, they weren nothing ydel;
The fomy steedes on the golden brydel
Gnawynge, and faste the armurers also
With fyle and hamer, prikyng to and fro;
Yemen on foote, and communes many oon,
With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
Pypes, trompes, nakers, and clariounes,
That in the bataille blown bloody sounes.
The paleys ful of peples up and down,
Heere thre, ther ten, holdynge hir questoun,
Dyvynynge of thise Thebane knyghtes two.
Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
Somme helden with hym with the blake berd,
Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke
herd;

Somme seyde he looked grymme and he wolde
fichte,
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle ful of divynynge
Longe after that the sonne gan to sprynge.
THE grete Thebesus, that of his sleepe awaked
With mynstralcie & noyse that was maked,
Heeld yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
Til that the Thebane knyghtes, bothe yliche
Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
Duc Thebesus was at a wyndow set,
Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
The peple preeseth thiderward ful soone
Hym for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
And eek to herkne his heste and his sentence.
An heraud on a scaffold made an hoo!
Til al the noyse of peple was ydo;

And whan he saugh the noyse of peple al stille,
Tho shewed he the myghty dukes wille.
THE lord hath of his heigh discreccioun
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise;
Wherfore, to shapen that they shal nat dye,
He wolde his firste purpos modifye.
No man therfore, up payne of los of lyf,
No maner shot, ne polax, ne short knyff
Into the lystes sende, ne thider bryngre;
Ne short swerd, for to stoke with poynt bitynge,
No man ne drawe, ne bere by his syde.
Ne no man shal unto his felawe ryde
But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounde spere;
foyne, if hym list, on foote, hymself to were.
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And noght slayn, but be broght unto the stake
That shal ben ordeyned on either syde,
But thider he shal by force, and there abyde.
And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
On outhir syde, or elles sleen his make,
No lenger shal the turneyng laste.
God spede you! gooth forth, and ley on faste!
With long swerd & with mace fighteth youre fille.
Gooth now youre wey; this is the lordes wille.